526 After the bath a dry longyi is slipped on over the wet one which is then
291 washed clean straight away. The poorest, who do not always possess a
515 spare longyi, sometimes let themselves into a stream gradually, lifting the longyi higher as they go in, and when the water is bosom-high they keep the garment on their head, letting it down again as they emerge. Our use for the adaptability of the longyi was to stand on a diving platform with it opened wide at the bottom, jump feet first and let the air rush in, nicking the longyi in at the ankles as we struck the water. This

makes you land with a balloon which floats you for a minute or two like those swollen celluloid ducks in babies' tubs. My friend Tin Tin Thoung was just like a swan on these occasions; she was not pretty normally, being very thin and angular, but she had a long and graceful neck, and when she floated on the water, gliding along with her neck rising out of her big round longyi, she looked like a beautiful swan to me.
[262] After bathing, the Taik Wans' mother had basketfuls of Indian corn, the tender ones boiled and the tougher ones roasted, and dishes of the peeled marians doused in fish sauce awaiting us.

981 Besides these social visits there were special festivals that came with
585 the months, and occasions common to every family's history—the ear-boring of the girl, the initiation into the priesthood of the boy, and marriages of grown-up children—which had to be celebrated in traditional forms. Most minkadaws preferred to hold marriage ceremonies in Rangoon, Moulmein or Mandalay to have as much fashion and show as possible, but the ear-boring (*nadwin*) and initiation into priesthood (*shinbyu*) find a better background in country towns. Nadwin is the coming of age of a girl, not for marriage, but for the initiation into the pleasant vanities of a woman's life. It is fine enough to sit with a rich

and full dress on a cushion, the centre of the crowd of people who have been invited for feasting, to have the ears pierced with a gold pin and after this always to wear diamond ear-rings, but the ceremony has no deeper significance than that the parent feels he has done the best for his daughter at this stage of her life. The shinbyu, however, is much more than a social event. It has a religious meaning of the fullest beauty.

Although the women of Burma figure as actively and have the same rights as men in the fields of business, property, and professions of the modern world, we always keep alive in us the religious feeling that we are "below" mankind. It is not so much a feeling that women are a lower race as that a man has the nobility of manhood in him. We call it *hpon*, the glory, the holiness of a man, and we respect this not with subservience but with the same feelings as we respect monks and parents. A wife does not throw her longyi across her husband's bed, she does not touch any of his possessions with her feet in carelessness, she uses a separate mug for her bathwater. A bad wife who does not respect her husband's manhood does him the greatest harm, for a man cannot prosper if his hpon is hampered; indeed, some women who indulge in black magic deliberately *hpon-nein* their husbands, that is, lower his hpon by carelessly wielding brooms above his head, throwing women's longyis on his pillow, thus making him subordinate, and believing that this makes the wife's will prevail over the husband's. But such a man can never make progress in his career.

It is the Buddhist belief that the attainment of a perfect life is as a man, as shown in Gautama Buddha's life as Prince Siddhartha. Prince Siddhartha was the son of King Suddhodana, who surrounded his son with all the luxury and splendour that his kingdom on the slopes of the Himalayas could offer. To prevent his son from renouncing his princely life for one of poverty and meditation he kept all sights of sorrow, sickness and decay hidden from him. He found him a perfect wife, beautiful, meek and affectionate, who bore him a son; but the prince in his excursions to a park in the city came across a decrepit old man, a sick old man and a corpse, which sights made him sad at the thought of human misery in this world. The next time, however, he saw a hermit which suggested that peace of mind was achievable by renunciation of the vanities of the world. On the night that his son was born, Prince Siddhartha made the Great Renunciation and left everything to go into solitude and find out the cause of misery, and the means of its removal. The Dhammapada says of the world:

> Come! behold this world which is like a decked royal chariot, wherein the foolish immerse themselves; but for the wise there is no attachment.

face from bringing something off, money is paid in advance, rush tactics are employed to prevent the man returning from abroad from marrying the sweetheart of his college days, and in some cases even magic is resorted to, though in secret. This black magic, especially, involves some very undignified actions. A younger cousin of mine once warned his mother: "Please, Mother, never try to sell me like a bullock, or worse still to arrange a marriage for my sister. I will not help you to jump thrice on eggshells or throw ten viss of fish into a well at dead of night under instructions from a soothsayer."

Although marriages were constantly being arranged among our circle of friends in Thaton, I was not allowed to attend weddings as a young unmarried girl. What we did attend regularly with the grown-ups were the *u-bok-nay*, the duty day gatherings every week in the resthouses among the hills. On these days Buddhists who choose to observe the day, obey eight or ten precepts instead of five. Amongst these ten are the abstaining from food after mid-day, absence of ornament and cosmetics in dress, meditation and prayer, and absence of a high couch in sleep. In Thaton the observance of this day was made the weekly social event with the same combination of material enjoyment and religious piety that characterizes all Burmese functions as described previously. Each family went to the hills early in the morning with mats, betel boxes and a well-cooked meal. The girls wore all the jewellery they had because we had not yet taken the precepts, and this was a good chance of showing that a family did not lack wealth. We met in the resthouses, to one of which a monk came to intone the precepts. These we repeated in chorus after him; then the elders talked and chewed betel, and at about 10-30 the whole party went to bathe in the pools made by the waterfalls down the hills. We went back to find the pooled dishes of four or five families laid out in a rich feast. We stuffed ourselves with this. The law states that food should not be eaten after noon, and the law was always obeyed in the letter if not in the spirit.

One maiden lady in Rangoon who kept duty days regularly ate till as near noon as she possibly could. She usually finished her meal with fruit, and if she was eating a banana when noon struck with a loud bang from the cannon at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, "Hawl" she would exclaim, and in would go the whole length of the banana into her mouth. After noon, tea and coffee are not allowed either but aerated waters, which look so much like water, are sanctioned. When my husband was a novice monk in the monastery, they were allowed medicinal products also after noon, and the hungry young novices often made a delicious soup of garlic (a digestive) fried in butter (medicinal component), and water poured on to the fragrant compound.

running with unholy energy and two small boys streaking after them shouting: "My hpongyi! Hey, my hpongyi!" 525

The showy vanity of Rangoon was seen at its greatest at wedding celebrations where no woman of any standing came without a full load of jewellery, either owned or borrowed for the occasion. For weddings of families like ours hundreds of invitations had always to be sent out owing to the tradition of acknowledging distant relationships and connections. It would be considered rude also not to invite the friends among clerks and traders from every town in which my father had been posted during our growing-up years. 585 511

Marriage is a social contract in Burma. To be married one needs no recourse to legal or priestly officers. The *let-htat*, laying of hands one on the other, can be performed in the presence of elders, or a feast can be given to a few people to obtain recognition of the married state. This is done after elopements, for example, when the parents have become reconciled and the young couple is too shy to go through the pantomime of a marriage ceremony. For divorce, also, no legal procedure is necessary, but convention makes divorces rare. Although monogamy is almost universal in Burma, polygamy is not forbidden by the law. A "mistress" of a married man is considered a sort of wife, but the disapproval with which this is regarded is shown in the term applied to her: *ma-ya-nga*, lesser wife. But the liberty operates both ways, and in the rare cases of a woman who runs to a second husband without any agreement having been reached beforehand, she is said to have a *lin-ngè*, lesser husband. The lack of legal safeguards of a woman's position as the only wife is amply compensated for by the rulings of Burmese Buddhist Law as regards her property. She retains sole ownership of whatever property she brings to the marriage, and on the dissolution of the marriage is entitled to half of all the additions of wealth since the marriage. Neither can an irate husband make a will leaving his money to other relatives and strangers. Wills are forbidden by law; children inherit equal shares of the parents' legacy, except in the cases where there are more than four children in the family. Then the eldest takes one-quarter before the rest is divided equally amongst the other children. On the death of one parent the surviving parent still has sole ownership of half the property. The other half is open to division among the children, but it is only a black sheep which will insist on division while one parent is still alive. 581 562 428

When I had been home but a month, my brother appealed to me for help in arranging the matter of his marriage. His difficulty was that he had no wish to marry the various dowried young women with whom my relatives were trying to contract him; he had chosen his own bride but at the same time the stern array of cousins, aunts and uncles in our 584

lecturer went to the head of the grave and said in English: "So-and-so, I give you notice that you are no longer in the Jr. B. A. class." When U Tin Gyi died during an official visit to England, we held his cremation at Golders Green and succeeded in getting a Singhalese hpongyi from the Buddhist Lodge in London to perform the rites. In spite of the environment of the crematorium we felt that we had achieved a dim and religious Buddhist atmosphere, such as he would have wished, by the time the hpongyi had intoned the verses, with all the gathered Burmese students repeating them phrase by phrase. But suddenly one of the English officers present got up and read in English: "U Tin Gyi, O.B.E., Registrar for Co-operative Societies in the Government of Burma, I give you leave to relinquish your post in the service of the Government. Signed—Adams." As if the persistent ghost might return to haunt in English, having been dismissed in only one of his two languages.)

Mr. Bernard Swithinbank of the I.C.S. had, through long years of friendship for Burmese people, laid the hands of many young couples one upon the other in marriage, and in this case he seemed particularly fitted for the task, for twenty-five years before he had married the parents of the bride, and though he could not perform for the bridegroom's parents their marriage ceremony which was held in Grandfather's time, it was he who gave my father leave to go to Thaton, as senior officer wishing him all prosperity in his marriage.

At last the great day arrived and all the male cousins and uncles collected at our house to dress the bridegroom with as much fuss as attends a bride in any other country. My mother had bought three pink silk turbans varying barely perceptibly in shade, so that the young man's complexion might be matched exactly when the fateful hour approached. My two young sisters and I took one each and sewed the finest possible seams, but submitting every inch as we went long to the scrutiny of my senior uncle Kyaw Din who said that a man's turban needed finer sewing than any woman's garment. My *Ko Lay*, most debonair of the cousins, tied the turban on my brother's head, while the band of elder brothers-once-removed stood around and complained that he did not make the floating end dance and toss with sufficient sprightliness. Two uncles and two cousins combined to tie his pasoe, the magnificent skirt which had been brought down from Mandalay and matched in the weaving with the bride's own skirt. My brother submitted to all of this with a meekness born of never having worn full Burmese dress before. All the while my three sisters danced around to look at him from every angle, exclaiming with sauciness and delight how beautiful and pink he looked, for my brother was really a robust and dark-skinned type of man who liked to wear sober English clothes.

• 585 When we arrived in procession at the bride's house, we found all her relatives gathered in the drawing-room, men down one side and women down the other; at the head a couch for the presiding elders, U Maung Maung and Mr. Swithinbank, before it a pair of rich cushions for the bridal pair to sit upon, and before it again a giant bowl of carved silver, filled with flowers and offerings. Everything in here was silent, restrained and correct. None but relatives were present, not divorcees, nor those whose married lives had been scandalous, lest they spoil the auspicious nature of the day.

585 292 832 I slipped into the bedroom to see the bride and, pausing, caught my breath to see how lovely she looked at that moment. On her wedding-day a Burmese woman wears the full court-dress of the by-gone days of the Burmese kings; the dress was worn by the queens and princesses of our songs and history, as they bowed before the magnificence of the king on his throne, as they stood by casements in the moonlight, as they sang songs of melancholy when evil days were upon them and their enemies had prevailed over them. The long side tress, the trailing open skirt, the tight jacket which left the bosom bare for necklaces of diamonds, were created to show the perfections of a beautiful woman. Neither tall nor short should she be, her waist small and her breast carried high, her skin smooth and yellow like the thanakha finely ground, rich and creamy, her eyes like those of a golden doe, beneath eyebrows arched no heavier than a three days' moon, her lips two ruby gems, and her hair as black as a beetle's wings. Such was Ommadhanti, such Pabhawadi, the beautiful one. Such was my sister-in-law on that day as she came out, betraying no emotion and recognizing no one as she walked up the room in silence and sank down on the cushion beside the bridegroom.

585 Now the writer of the panegyric rose and chanted the paean of praise. The young *tha-do-tha*, Maung Sett Kaing, so blessed with virtues, complete with every manly quality; the young *tha-do-thami*, Khin Khin Su, so beautiful and full of womanly dignity; both of good race, good stock, to be married thus auspiciously, to have a good long life together, so great is their merit. Then the elder presiding lady put the offerings from the silver bowl, one after another, into the hands of the bride, and she made obeisance with each one. Now was every evil banished and every good present, for the performance of the *mingala*, the auspicious thing. The bridal pair rose from the cushions and took their places on the couch; U Maung Maung took the hands of bride and groom, laid them one upon the other, and dipped them into a golden bowl of water as the reader of the panegyric now called witness to the marriage. Then Mr. Swithinbank held their hands together and said

in English : "Maung Sett Khaing and Khin Khin Su, I pronounce you man and wife." 585

All this was a solemn affair; there were no music, no speeches, no outsiders, and no photographs; but by the end of the ceremony murmurs of the activity in the garden floated in. There, a tea party such as the song recounts was being arranged, with an orchestra, Indian waiters, photographers and young men in bright longyis to usher the guests around. After the tea, the wedding guests went to see not so much the presents which were laid out on tables, but the bridal chamber, fitted with richest trappings, and guarded against male intrusion by a gold thread across the door, to break across which the men must pay in gold. All the guests now streamed into this chamber, the women peering here and there, lifting the coverlet of the bed to see if the traditional blankets of velvet were present, prodding the softness of the mattress, estimating the taste of the bride in the choice of fine linen and lace hangings. The custom is for the pair to spend their first days in this chamber in the house of the bride's family, before they go to live in their own house.

Different though the life in Rangoon was from the days in the districts, our Buddhist festivals still came round for social gathering and celebration. Being a big town, however, with electricity, crowded streets and cars, the celebrations tended to stand out more as night celebrations. Pagoda festivals at any of the pagodas in the suburbs drew a procession of cars and buses to the night bazaars, anyeins, and the light points twinkling out of the surrounding blackness. But these twinkling lights were multiplied a thousandfold at the lighting-up festivals of which we had two. Thadingyut, or the release from Lenten sobriety, ushers in the springtime of the year : now may all weddings, shinbyus and ear-borings take place, now may fasting days decrease and the full moons of lighting and harvesting and the new year water-play follow before another Lent; the deluge of the rains has ceased at last, the sky has been washed blue and the air blows cool and gentle. At Thadingyut, all houses light up their verandahs and gardens; streets of houses put up pavilions and offer food and stage shows to all the townspeople who ride along in cars, trams and rickshaws to look at the lights from end to end of the town. [369] 796

During my last Thadingyut in Burma we had a happier idea. Leaving our house with a nominal number of oil-flame dishes burning, we went in a party of twelve to the hill of the Shwe Dagon, to light there one thousand candles as our magnificent deed of merit. We walked up the western approach, a covered way of pillars and stalls selling fragrant flowers, incense sticks and candles for offering; barefooted up steps which we came to sweep at other times in the belief that this good deed brings the doer beauty of long and black hair in the next existence. From a

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Little presents are exchanged. The *soupirant* brings a gay kerchief with some love-verses written on it, perhaps his own composition, more probably the erotic sighings of the prince in the last play he heard, or cribbed bodily from a song-book for Kālathas (Corinthians, lads of mettle). The girl gives him some green cheroots, rolled by her fair hands, or a brilliant woollen muffler which she has knitted; but there is never any of the kissing and caressing indulged in by more urgent foreign lovers. The girl would look upon any attempts of such a nature as highly indecorous, and no doubt it is quite unsuited to her clothing.

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When at last everything has been settled — parents' consent obtained, dowry fixed, and a fortunate day and hour pitched upon — the marriage ceremony comes off in the house of the bride's parents. The ritual is very simple and has nothing whatever of a religious character about it; in fact the celibate pôngyis would be grossly scandalised if they were asked to take any part in it. A great feast is prepared at the expense of the bridegroom or his parents. All the relations, friends, and neighbours are invited, and it is the publicity of the thing that is really the main feature of the ceremony. The old custom that the bride and bridegroom should join their right hands together, palm to palm, in the presence of all the assembled guests, and then should eat rice out of the same dish and feed each other with one or two morsels in turtle-dove fashion, has in many cases died out, and the eating and drinking, the talk of the men in the main room of the house and of the women in the inner apartment, is quite enough to solemnise the union. When the newly-married couple retire into the bridal chamber it is sometimes in the larger towns the custom to shower saffron-coloured rice on them, but this, like the entire seclusion in which the happy pair are supposed to pass the next seven days, is very seldom actually carried out.

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In the country villages, however, two ancient customs are still very generally prevalent. The one is to tie a string across the road along which the bridegroom must pass to the house of his intended. He comes in procession with all his friends, carrying the greater portion of the belongings

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585 369 with which he intends to set up house: a bundle of mats, a long arm-chair, a teak box, mattresses, pillows, besides materials for the feast and presents for the bride. The people who have put up the string — called the gold or silver cord—usually young men intent on a jollification of their own, stop the happy man, and threaten to break the string with a curse on the married couple unless some money is given them. It is simple extortion, and English district officers sometimes forbid it. Nevertheless the speculation is usually successful. I suppose no one feels very niggardly on his marriage day.

585 The other custom is much more singular, more ancient, and infinitely more disagreeable. On the night of the marriage a band of the young bachelors of the place come and shower stones and sticks on the roof of the house where the happy couple are, keeping up sometimes such a sustained battery that the thatch or wooden shingles suffer materially, while the furniture and even the newly-wedded couple occasionally do not escape injury. In Lower Burma the lads are usually bought off with a sum of money, and where the officials do not interfere to prevent it, the custom has degenerated into a system of extortion. Not a few lawsuits have sprung out of such sieges. The money paid in toll to this horseplay goes by the name of ké-bo, and is supposed to be devoted by the receivers to making offerings at the pagoda, but the young men nowadays use it shamelessly for their own entertainment. In Upper Burma the 585 114 blackmail is never demanded, and consequently Father San Germano was puzzled to conceive any reason for the extraordinary practice. Captain Forbes seeing the payment to procure relief, believed that extortion was the sole origin as well as object of the performance. But the learned in Burmese folk-lore assign it a much higher and more estimable 585 773 beginning. When, after the world was formed, it was first peopled from the superior heavens of the Byammās, of the nine that remained behind, weighed down by the gross earthly food they had eaten, five gradually became men and four women. When these Byammā-gyi ko-yauk, these nine great ancestors of the Burmese and of all mankind, had gradually degenerated, through the substitution of Pada-

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lata for the original flavoured earth, and of Thale rice for the leguminous creeper, desire arose among them, and four of the men took the four women to wife. The fifth man naturally resented being left compulsorily single, and pelted the happy couples with stones on their marriage night. Sympathy with the feelings of this archetypal bachelor has perpetuated the stone-throwing by the lu-byos down to the present day, and if there is no dearth of eligible spinsters in our times, the lonely bachelor may be allowed to express his envy of his friend's bliss without being accused of anything but gross cupidity. 585 773

After marriage the couple almost always live for two or three years in the house of the bride's parents, the son-in-law becoming one of the family and contributing to its support. Setting up a separate establishment, even in Rangoon, where the young husband is a clerk in an English office, is looked upon with disfavour as a piece of pride and ostentation. If the girl is an only daughter, she and her husband stay on till the old people die. 591 583

Polygamy is recognised and permitted, but practically does not exist now in British territory. A man with more than one wife becomes a subject of common talk, and a native official now living is well known all through the delta as the myo-ok with twenty wives. In native territory the right to have several wives was equally little used in practice. Many of the high officials who travelled about over large districts had wives in almost all the towns they visited —a custom in great measure induced by the rule which provided that the mayă-gyi, the chief wife, had to be left in Mandalay as a hostage for the fidelity of the official. But the great bulk of the people are, and always have been, monogamous. King Mindôn had fifty-three recognised *wives*, of whom thirty-seven survived him. His children numbered one hundred and ten, of whom upwards of fifty survived him. Besides the wives, like Solomon, he had numerous concubines. So, indeed, have many lesser people. 595 [647]

The forbidden degrees are few. Marriages with mother, daughter, sister, and half-sister, aunt, grandmother, and granddaughter, are forbidden, but none else. A son may marry his stepmother; it is expressly mentioned in the 582

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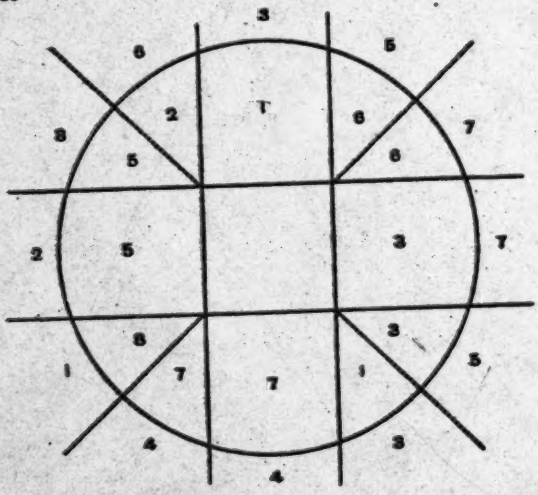
both contracting parties would soon die if children of these hostile days married. 581 787

On the other hand, there is an elaborate figure showing what unions according to birthdays will be lucky.

The numbers represent the days of the week according to the order. 1, Sunday; 2, Monday; 3, Tuesday; 4, Wednesday; 5, Thursday; 6, Friday; 7, Saturday; 8, Yahu (half Wednesday). The inner numbers represent the man's birthday; the outer the woman's. Those who choose their wives in accordance with this figure will be happy and well-to-do.



The outer ring the maiden's,
The inner ring the man's.
All ye who would live easeful
On this scheme form your plans.

All these rhymes are learned by the little boys at school, sometimes formally taught them by the preceptor as an excerpt from the Bedin, sometimes, when the yahan refuses to recognise the validity of these books, studied surreptitiously along with the secular plays and song-books. Whatever else a girl may know, you may be sure she can give you the marriage rhymes. 581 787 869

After the marriage has been settled upon, lucky combination of birthdays, parents' consent, settlement of dower and 585

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585 805 so on, all satisfactorily arranged, the formalities are not yet over. A lucky day has to be sought from the horoscopes of the two chief parties, but beyond this there are a number of obstacles which must on no account be overlooked. In the first place, with the pious the same rule prevails as in England, that no marriages should take place in Lent. This cuts upwards of three months out of the year immediately. Unfortunately a number of persons are so completely in the world of kāma, the seat of the passions, that they care very little whether it is the season of the Wā or not. But almost every one, whether pious or not, considers well the character of the months as given in the marriage linga. The year begins with Tagu, commencing about the middle of April. In this month and Kasôn the next, couples marrying will be very rich. In Nayôn they will love one another. Those marrying in Waso and Wagaung, when Lent begins, will die or be grievously sick. If the young pair are so mad as to brave the danger, their parents should stop the marriage. In Tawthalin, Na'daw, and Pyatho, if you marry, you will lose goods and money. In Thadingyut you will have slaves, children, and money as much as you want. In Tasaungmôn slaves, buffaloes, cattle, and furniture in abundance, will flow in upon the married couple. Tabodwè and Tabaung are very unlucky for those who tempt Hymen. There will be no children, or only girls, and misfortunes will
587 be frequent. Nevertheless though there is all this trouble in getting a wife to your mind, as well as lucky in time of birth, worldly goods, and season of marriage, there are very few Burmans, not in the sacred order, who are not married before they are twenty, and happily married too. As the popular saying puts it—

Ye hnin nga,
Lin hnin maya.

Fish to the water,
Man to Eve's daughter.

584 [791] is not particularly well known to them. The boy's parents will be informed by the girl's family that their decision must await the outcome of consultation with an astrologer concerning the compatability of the birth dates of the prospective bride and groom. If the marriage is found to be an auspicious one -- which it usually will be found to be if the girl's parents desire the match -- an affirmative answer is relayed to the boy's parents. The latter thereupon call on her parents, and in the presence of elders, formally ask for the girl's hand. From this moment the couple are considered betrothed and must not go about in public unchaperoned.

● 585 The wedding date is astrologically determined. The length of the engagement depends upon the availability of an auspicious wedding date. In general, lengthy engagements are disliked. In no case should an engagement carry over the period of Waso, the so-called Buddhist 'Lent.'

Before the wedding ceremony, the bride's house is open to friends and relatives, who are expected to drop in to help prepare the house for the wedding, lending household items that may be needed for the occasion. A pavilion adjoining the house is erected to accomodate the crowd that will attend. All the helpers and would-be helpers in this work are offered meals and light refreshments.

The bride's family normally bears all the expenses of these preparations, but sometimes the boy's family will mention a sum of money either as a contribution towards the wedding or as an indication of their son's ability to support a wife. If such funds are offered, they will be mentioned at the time the girl's hand is sought.

One room in the girl's house is set aside as the bridal chamber. In families of average or better means it is furnished with a bed, draperies, and complete toilet and dressing facilities. In poorer families that cannot afford to furnish the bridal chamber in elaborate fashion, some show of style will be made in furnishing the bed, at least. By the evening before the wedding day the room must be ready, with all the wedding gifts on display.

On the wedding day three or four intimate married friends of the girl dress her. This must not be done by widows or divorcees, for it would bode ill for the marriage. For unmarried girls to perform this task would be immodest. Neither should a pregnant woman take part in dressing the bride, for that would be bad for her baby. The dressing of the bride must begin sufficiently early so that she will be completely ready at a precise, astrologically determined wedding hour.

The bridegroom's party arrives just prior to the appointed time for the ceremony. It includes two of his bachelor friends as well as his family. He takes his seat on a cushion on the platform that has been specially erected. The bride is brought out by her matrons and approaches with eyes downcast. She takes her seat on a cushion to the bridegroom's left. Across the platform, from left to right, are placed three silver offering bowls. A fourth bowl, on the right hand edge of the platform, contains puffed rice. The bridegroom's bachelor friends take seats to his rear; the matrons of the bride sit directly behind her.

794 585 A lay elder, arranged for by the bride's mother, officiates. He recites a paean of praise concerning the merits of the bride and groom and the goodness

of their families. The bride and groom are each handed a spray of flowers from the offering bowls and they make obeisance to the guardian spirits of their respective households. With a second spray they make obeisance to their parents and elders. Then a small tray containing fruit and rice is placed before them. The lay elder places a spoonful of this food first to the bridegroom's, then to the bride's lips. As he does this he makes a statement to the effect that this is the auspicious meal and that he hopes blessings may flow from it. 794 585

At this point, a happy and fruitfully married couple from among the oldest people in the community step forward to marry the couple. The left hand of the man is placed on top of the right hand of the girl. Water is poured on their hands thus joined and a silk scarf tied over them as the elderly couple recite words to the effect that they are now united. A chanter arises and intones a song of praise for long life. The contents of the bowl of puffed rice and money are scattered among the audience, and everyone scrambles for them. Now the bride and groom rise and are led to the bridal chamber, across the doorway of which is stretched a golden chain. After the bride has entered, anyone who wishes to do so tries to barricade the doorway and demand money of the groom. He is obliged to pay everyone who makes such demands. This money is known as 'stone money,' from the old custom, still practiced sometimes, of stoning the house of a couple on their wedding night until the bridegroom arises and pays them to desist. This behavior, the taunts and demands that are expressed, has an implied bawdiness about it. Once the couple have entered the bridal chamber, others may go in to inspect it. When all have left the chamber there is a general feast. Usually the feast in Tadagale partakes of the nature of a tea party, since a full scale feast is expensive. Each guest receives a symbolic gift, usually a cigar or a fan.

Old Age. Old age is the period after one's children are grown, the 'third age' of life. Women are definitely regarded as old after the menopause. The Burmese terms for 'old lady' and 'old man' are synonymous with grandparent terms, both in address and reference. Sometimes 'old mother' is used instead of 'old lady.' Long life is considered a great blessing and an indication of merit earned. Long life is prayed for and old age greatly idealized. 886 601 761

The ideal aged person is one who has successfully reared a family, has grandchildren, and a certain amount of material wealth. The aged are expected to be retiring and unobstrusive in their behavior. They should not go out visiting very much; they should eat less and avoid appearing too well dressed or jeweled when attending religious observances. 888

An attitude of resignation characterizes the outlook of the aged person. It is unheard of that old people should work. A possible exception would be a village headman, who, it is felt, should be a person of long experience. When aged people live with their children they assume the role of teachers of their grandchildren. Most of the time of elderly people is spent in activities centering around the pagodas and monasteries, organizing of religious festivals, and raising funds for the monks and charities. They often take leading roles in such activities. 887

The elderly members of a household arise early to see that the rice is cooked for the daily offering to the monks, and to insure that the household altar is properly looked after. It is preferable for them to arise before dawn, for to do so is considered very meritorious.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XV

WOMEN—II

'The husband is lord of the wife.'
Laws of Manu.

MARRIAGE is not a religious ceremony among the Burmese. Religion has no part in it at all; as religion has refrained from interfering with government, so does it in the relations of man and wife. Marriage is purely a worldly business, like entering into partnership; and religion, the Buddhist religion, has nothing to do with such things. Those who accept the teachings of the great teacher in all their fulness do not marry.

Indeed, marriage is not a ceremony at all. It is strange to find that the Burmese have actually no necessary ceremonial. The Laws of Manu, which are the laws governing all such matters, make no mention of any marriage ceremony; it is, in fact, a status. Just as two men may go into partnership in business without executing any deed, so a man and a woman may enter into the marriage state without undergoing any form. Amongst the richer Burmese there is, however, sometimes a ceremony.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

585 Friends are called to the wedding, and a ribbon is stretched round the couple, and then their hands are clasped; they also eat out of the same dish. All this is very pretty, but not at all necessary.

It is, indeed, not a settled point in law what constitutes a marriage, but there are certain things that will render it void. For instance, no marriage can be a marriage without the consent of the girl's parents if she be under age, and there are certain other conditions which must be fulfilled.

But although there be this doubt about the actual ceremony of marriage, there is none at all about the status. There is no confusion between a woman who is married and a woman who is not. The condition of marriage is well known, and it brings the parties under the laws that pertain to husband and wife. A woman not married does not, of course, obtain these privileges; there is a very strict line between the two.

585 515 157 Amongst the poorer people a marriage is frequently kept secret for several days. The great pomp and ceremony which with us, and occasionally with a few rich Burmese, consecrate a man and a woman to each other for life, are absent at the greater number of Burmese marriages; and the reason they tell me is that the girl is shy. She does not like to be stared at, and wondered at, as a maiden about to be a wife; it troubles her that the affairs of her heart, her love, her marriage, should be so public. The young men come at night and throw stones upon the house roof, and demand presents from the bridegroom. He does not mind giving the presents; but he, too, does not like the publicity. And so

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

marriage, which is with most people a ceremony performed in full daylight with all accessories of display, is with the Burmese generally a secret. Two or three friends, perhaps, will be called quietly to the house, and the man and the woman will eat together, and thus become husband and wife. Then they will separate again, and not for several days, or even weeks perhaps, will it be known that they are married; for it is seldom that they can set up house for themselves just at once. Often they will marry and live apart for a time with their parents. Sometimes they will go and live together with the man's parents, but more usually with the girl's mother. Then after a time, when they have by their exertions made a little money, they build a house and go to live there; but sometimes they will live on with the girl's parents for years.

A girl does not change her name when she marries, nor does she wear any sign of marriage, such as a ring. Her name is always the same, and there is nothing to a stranger to denote whether she be married or not, or whose wife she is; and she keeps her property as her own. Marriage does not confer upon the husband any power over his wife's property, either what she brings with her, what she earns, or what she inherits subsequently; it all remains her own, as does his remain his own. But usually property acquired after marriage is held jointly. You will inquire, for instance, who is the owner of this garden, and be told Maung Han, Ma Shwè, the former being the husband's name and the latter the wife's. Both names are used very frequently in business and in legal proceedings, and indeed it is

length) draped over one shoulder. The PUNA, part of the scarf, still draped, is placed on front of the worshipping woman for her head and hands as she bows. The beads, a string about 2 feet long made of black lacquer or of red or white beads about ½ inch in diametre are called SHIN-PA-HKE (count-beads). They are worn about the neck when not in use, and are "counted" by the fingers of one hand. Each bead, thus counted calls to the worshipper's mind a vision of Buddha as she says ARA HAHN (God) in a low voice. While in this dress women do not decorate their hair with flowers or wear jewelry or cosmetiques as such would be unseemly. 792 291 293 [788]

The older men and other religious men (who are gathering alms as members of Buddhist lay societies) wear a loose white robe over a white jacket, white head band, praying bead necklace, and a chocolate coloured scarf draped over one shoulder. The general public must wear their very best clothes for religious festivals but the women do not use cosmetiques. "Rangoon Sabbath" is the term applied to the less strict observations of the town people who may appear with a little THANAKA or other cosmetiques. The marriage dress of the bride is an older form of costume involving use of a long split skirt with cut-flaring jackets. 888 779 575 291 [369] [779] [292] [585]

The hair styles are important and denote age and sex. Children of both sexes wear their hair in a knot at the top of the head with a fringe of short hair like a hood below. The older men's style was long hair knotted on one side in the back of the head; except in villages this has been superceded by the western short crop ranging from a long "Pompador" to short "crew cuts" - the latter being rarer and more modern. Old men wear very short cropped hair or are shaven - as the Pongyis and nuns. Maidens wear their hair in elaborately woven trusses - earlier on top of the head in a disc-shaped - now in chain braids at the back of the head. False switches of hair are commonly used. Flowers are used as decoration on all occasions. The usual style for married ladies is a knot at the back of the head wound around a rectangular comb of wood, (common) tortoise shell, ivory or gold. Older and married women sometimes appear in an ancient ceremonial style consisting of the hair wrapped around a fiber cylinder 302 177 369

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

584 From this moment the couple are considered betrothed, and must not go about in public unchaperoned.

[787] The wedding date is astrologically determined. The length of the engagement period depends upon the availability of an auspicious wedding date. Generally speaking, lengthy engagements are disliked. In no case should an engagement carry over the Buddhist "Lent."

585 Before the wedding ceremony, the bride's house is open to friends and relatives, who are expected to drop in to help prepare the house for the wedding, lending household items that may be needed for the occasion. A pavilion adjoining the house is erected to accommodate the crowd that will attend. All the helpers and would-be helpers in this work are offered meals and light refreshments.

The bride's family normally bears all the expenses of these preparations, but sometimes the boy's family will mention a sum of money either as a contribution toward the wedding or as an indication of their son's ability to support a wife. If such funds are forthcoming, they will mention them at the time they ask for the girl's hand.

One room in the girl's house is set aside as the bridal chamber. In families of average or better financial means it is furnished with a bed, draperies, and complete toilet and dressing facilities. In poorer families that cannot afford to furnish the bridal chamber in elaborate fashion, some show of style will be made in furnishing the bed at least. By the evening before the wedding day the room must be ready, with all the wedding gifts on display.

On the wedding day three or four intimate married friends of the girl dress her. This must not be done by widows or divorcees, for it would bode ill for the marriage. For unmarried girls to perform this task would be immodest. Neither should a pregnant woman dress the bride, for this would be bad for her baby. The dressing of the bride begins sufficiently early for her to be ready at the astrologically-determined wedding hour.

The bridegroom's party arrives just prior to the appointed time for the ceremony. It includes two of his bachelor friends as well as his family. He takes his seat on a cushion on the platform that has been specially erected for the ceremony. The bride is brought out by her matrons, and approaches with her eyes downcast. She takes her seat on a cushion on the bridegroom's left. Across the platform, from left to right, are placed three silver offering bowls. A fourth bowl, on the right hand edge of the platform, contains puffed rice. The bride-

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

groom's bachelor friends take seats to his rear; the matrons of the bride sit directly behind her. 585

Either a Brahmin or a lay elder, arranged for by the bride's mother, officiates. He recites a paean of praise concerning the merits of the bride and groom and the goodness of their families. The bride and groom are each handed a spray of flowers from the offering bowls and they make obeisance to the guardian spirits of their respective households. With a second spray they make obeisance to their parents and elders. Then a small tray containing fruit and rice is placed before them. The person officiating then places a spoonful of this food first to the bridegroom's, then to the bride's lips. As he does this he makes a statement to the effect that this is the auspicious meal and that he hopes blessing may flow from it.

At this point, a happy and fruitfully married couple from among the oldest people in the community step forward to marry the couple. The left hand of the man is placed on top of the right hand of the girl. Water is poured on their hands thus joined and a silk scarf tied over them as the elderly couple recite words to the effect that they are now united. If there is a Brahmin or professional chanter present he arises and intones a chant of praise for long life. The contents of the bowl of puffed rice and silver (or money) are scattered among the audience and everyone scrambles for them. Now the bride and groom rise and are led to the bridal chamber, across the doorway of which is stretched a golden chain. After the bride has entered, anyone who wishes to do so tries to barricade the doorway and demand money of the groom. He is obliged to pay everyone who makes such demands. This money is known as "stone money," from the old custom, still practiced in some cases, of stoning the house of the couple on the wedding night until paid to desist. This behavior, the taunts and demands that are expressed, has an implied bawdiness about it. Once the couple have entered the bridal chamber others have a right to go in to inspect it. When all have left the chamber there is general feasting. In former times wedding feasts were on a large scale, when every guest was given a present. Today, however, the feast partakes more of the nature of a tea party and only a symbolic gift, usually either a cigar or a fan, is given. (431)

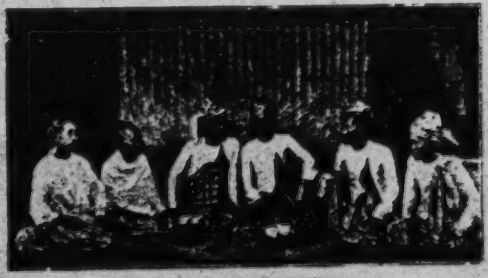
Old Age. Old age, in Burmese thought, is the period after one's children are grown, the "third age" of life. Women are definitely considered to be in old age after the menopause. The terms in Burmese for "old lady" and "old man" are synonymous with grandparent terms, both in address and reference. Sometimes "old mother" is used for "old lady." 886

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

149. THE SUITOR'S VISIT.

work-boxes, loom-laths, mirror-stands are often the lover's handiwork. Not the least of the lover's offerings is poetry. If he be a scholar, he will sing or recite to his mistress verses of his own in praise of her charms. But there are current ditties to the fancy of every one. The imagery which is the main feature of these odes, is borrowed from every source of beauty, blossom and flower, dewdrop and pearl, planet and star. Burmese metre is largely eked out with euphonic particles; at other times the diction is so compressed as to make the sense most difficult for a foreigner to grasp. 883 431 538

Marriages of affection are general. Romantic attachments are frequent in real life, as they are the rule in the play. The frequency of the mere marriage of convenience is not greater in Burma than in England or America. In this respect there is no parallel to the customs of the hill-tribes of Burma, the neighbouring Asiatic civilisations or even the Latin races of Europe. Their mutual qualities, physical, moral, and material, are for the most part known to the parties from childhood. Burmans evince an openness and frankness amounting to joviality, not to be met with in other parts of Asia. They indulge a much freer play of feature and yet greater freedom in the modulation of the voice. The term for betrothal—*sayán-pe*, earnest-money—testifies to the original purchase of the bride. In modern usage, however, the *sayán* is merely a share of the cost of outfit, according to means. It takes the form of a silk *ftamdin* or a piece of jewellery for the girl, and is brought by the lad when he comes with his parents to ask the consent of the girl's parents to the marriage. Where parents oppose, runaway matches are frequent. 581 152 584 581



150. MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

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151. THE IDEAL AND THE REAL.

They are generally condoned. Burmans do not wait to make money in order to marry, but marry in order to make money. Girls marry from the age of about twenty, and men about twenty-five. The marriage is a quiet affair. A day is fixed, when the lad and his parents repair to the home of the girl, whither some of the elders of the village (*lŭdyi*) have been invited for witness. The father of the lad addresses the parents of the girl in this wise: "Seeing that our children love each other, we pray you let your daughter be as our daughter and our son as your son" (*ekkau*). The girl's parents express their pleasure and approval, and according to one usage, the couple thereupon join hands (*letlat*), which means marriage; but the joining-of-hands is as a rule figurative. After this the lad goes and fetches his bedding, curtain, and clothes and places them in the house in token of reception into the family. In conclusion, the parties and the witnesses eat pickled tea together. When one or both parties are strangers in the place, friends undertake the part of parents and the elders make inquiries as to blood-relationship and pre-existing ties. Kinship closer than first-cousin and the corresponding step-relationships are respected—except by royalty (p. 170). Sometimes marriages are of a more festive description (*mungala*). Astrologers are called in and company entertained as at the *nàbauk mingala*. Other unions, again, are by mere mutual agreement, without formalities of any kind. By time-honoured custom the lads of the village claim the right to pelt the house of the new-married pair at night (*gè-pyit*), and it is usual to buy them off. New couples mostly start life in

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152. TATTOOING (TOGWIN, *see* p. 13).